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ABSTRACT

Experts from thirteen Arab nations met to discuss book development in their countries. This document, which is divided into four sections is a report of that meeting. Part one considers the problems of book development in the Arab countries under the following headings: (1) the present situation, (2) development of national book production, (3) development of national book distribution and (4) promotion of the flow of books within and to and from the region. The second part deals with International Book Year plans in the Arab states. Part three relates to the Egyptian proposal for the creation of a regional center for book development. Recommendations for a program of action are presented in part four. (SJ)

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MEETING OF EXPERTS ON BOOK DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

Cairo, 1-6 May 1972

FINAL REPORT

LI 003 813

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INTRODUCTION

Opening

1. The Meeting of Experts on Book Development in the Arab Countries was held at Cairo (Arab Republic of Egypt) from 1 to 6 May 1972. The present report of the Meeting was adopted unanimously.

2. The Meeting was opened by Dr. Mahmoud El-Sheniti, Chairman of the General Egyptian Book Organization, who read a message from H.E. Dr. Mohammad Abdel Kader Hatem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and Information. After welcoming the participants on behalf of the Egyptian Government, the message stressed the importance universally accorded to books in the past and recalled in that connexion that the first word of the Koran is "READ" (Iqra'). At the same time it emphasized the present-day rôle of books in cultural, economic and social development, which made the Meeting particularly important. The message went on to review the obstacles currently impeding book development in the Arab world, drawing particular attention to the problems of production, publication, translation, distribution and copyright, in addition to the basic problem of manpower. In view of the gravity of those problems, and of the necessity of solving them on a regional basis, Egypt was submitting to the Meeting a proposal for the establishment of a regional book centre for the Arab States, and assured the Meeting that it would be happy to make a major contribution to such a centre if it was created.

3. On behalf of the Director-General of Unesco, Mr. Julian Behrstock, Director, Office of Free Flow of Information and International Exchanges, defined the principal theme of the Meeting: regional co-operation among the Arab States. This co-operation could be particularly effective in the field of book development in view of the existence of an essential linguistic and cultural homogeneity that lent itself to regional initiatives. The region's book market could expand as illiteracy receded and the number of children attending school increased. One of the main objectives of the Meeting was therefore to put forward ways and means of developing not only the production but also the circulation of books among the countries of the region. The establishment of the regional centre proposed by the Egyptian Government should contribute to the implantation or consolidation of book production and distribution throughout the region. He hoped that International Book Year 1972 - that great joint venture which had been proclaimed by the General Conference of Unesco at its sixteenth session and in the context of which, by a singularly happy augury, the present Meeting was taking place - would be the basic instrument for giving whatever programme of action the experts adopted the necessary impetus for its implementation.

Participants and officers

4. The Meeting was attended by experts from 13 countries, invited by the Director-General of Unesco in their personal capacity. Some experts were accompanied by technical advisers. Observers from Member States and from international and regional organizations were also present. A complete list of participants is annexed to the report.

5. The experts unanimously elected the following officers:

Chairman: Dr. Mahmoud El-Sheniti (Arab Republic of Egypt);

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Ahmad Saad Al-Jasir (Kuwait);
Mr. Abdel Amir Al-Mu'alla (Iraq);
Mr. Abdel Kader Ben Cheikh (Tunisia);

Rapporteur: Mr. Bahige Osman (Lebanon).

Background of the Meeting

6. The Meeting was held in pursuance of a decision adopted by the General Conference at its sixteenth session (resolution 4.23). The common language and culture of the region and its long tradition of book production argued in favour of a concerted programme of book development in the Arab countries.

7. The Meeting formed an integral part of a long-term Unesco programme aimed at developing book production and distribution in the developing countries. At its thirteenth session, the General Conference had stressed the importance of books as means of contributing to the achievement of Unesco's objectives. In adopting the above-mentioned programme six years ago, the Conference was prompted by the consideration that books represent a decisive means of encouraging social and economic progress as well as international understanding. In connexion with the implementation of this programme, regional meetings of experts had already taken place in Asia (Tokyo, 1966), Africa (Accra, 1968) and Latin America (Bogotá, 1969). The Meeting for the Arab countries was the last of this series. It took place, moreover, in the context of International Book Year - 1972, which had been proclaimed by the General Conference of Unesco at its sixteenth session.

8. This report is in four parts. The first considers the problems of book development in the Arab countries, as these have emerged during the discussions and in the working papers. The second deals with International Book Year plans in the Arab States and the Charter of the Book. The third relates to the Egyptian proposal for the creation of a regional centre for book development in the Arab countries. The fourth summarizes the recommendations of the Meeting for a programme of action.

PART ONE

PROBLEMS OF BOOK DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

I. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF BOOKS IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

9. Any examination of book development in the Arab countries must take account in the first place of the physical features, demography and political geography of the region. The Arab world has a striking degree of cultural homogeneity due principally to Islam and the use of the Arabic language. However, the varying size of the component countries, the differences in ways of life, in population figures, in economics and consequently in education, rugged terrain and communication difficulties have made for diversity and disparities. Sixteen Arab countries(1) of the region had been invited to send experts and technical advisers to this Meeting. There are diverse cultural links with countries outside the region as well as many variations of the ethnic mixtures that derive from history. Nearly all the region has passed through a colonial or para-colonial stage. This and other historical features and vicissitudes of the Arab region had prevented books in Arabic from maintaining a pre-eminence consistent with the decisive part they played in the development of Mediterranean and Western civilizations and with the long cultural tradition of the region.

10. This mosaic accounts in part for the diversity of cultural levels. Illiteracy rates among the 125 million inhabitants of the sixteen Arab countries are now decreasing in the majority of these countries. However, until quite recently (and with wide local variations) about 73 per cent of the adult population was illiterate. The rate of illiteracy was still very high in the case of adults, and especially among women. About the year 1970, the total number of literate adults was around 18 million and that of children attending school (primary and secondary levels) approximately 15 million. Illiteracy, therefore, restricted the market for books and was obviously a major obstacle in the path of book development.

11. Against this background, the book situation in the Arab countries formed the basis of a lively general discussion in which almost all the experts took part.

12. It was pointed out that many of the countries were too small to develop viable publishing industries and that throughout the region editions of books tended to be limited in size. The present situation of books in the Arab countries, in which the great mass of the population still did not have access to books, was a grave obstacle to social and economic development.

13. More needed to be known about patterns of reading. It was essential to identify potential readers in order to develop wider reading habits. Libraries could play a major rôle in this connexion. But for the most part, libraries were not provided with suitable budgets, and suffered from inadequate services.

14. The expansion of the book industry and the development of the reading habit should be spurred by a mobilization of the press, periodicals, radio and television.

15. Reference was made to the need for improving the content of books. The importance was stressed of ensuring high quality books in Arabic so as to raise the cultural level of the region. It was felt that textbooks were the main requirement and that particular consideration should therefore be given to improving the quality of their content and presentation. This was also stressed in relation to children's books since the high percentage of potential readers in the Arab world are of school age and since it is in the school that the reading habit can be acquired. This is essential for the development of publishing.

16. In referring to the problem of copyright a number of speakers considered that this problem still hampers book development in the region. In this respect, professional associations of authors were essential. Translators' rights were also to be protected.

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(1) Algeria, Bahrain, Arab Republic of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Republic, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen Arab Republic, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

17. The necessity of importing the majority of the raw material needed for book production increases book prices. This was noted as another obstacle to access to books by the mass of people having a low income. Attention was also drawn to exchange control restrictions as a barrier to distribution.

18. It was pointed out that operational research should be carried out in order to adopt the modern technical equipment available for the printing requirements of books in Arabic. This is important since simpler and less expensive reading materials have to be provided. In this respect, unified systems of printing should be found and introduced in all the Arab countries, with the aim of making the book available to all.

19. One expert affirmed that illiteracy and economic problems were not the main reasons which limit book publishing. Although there are good books published in the Arab countries, the demand for these books by literate adults is rather low - this aspect should also be taken into account.

20. As regards translations, it was noted that the number of translations made into Arabic was many times higher than that of translations from Arabic. This also required consideration and Unesco was urged to address itself to this problem.

A. General problems

21. There are several common problems relating to book development in the Arab countries which were cited by the participants.

Firstly, there is the fundamental problem, both in the past and in the present, of a certain technical backwardness in printing in the Arab countries, due to the difficulties of adapting Arabic caligraphy to print typography. Arabic did not undergo the graphic simplifications that were imposed upon Western forms of writing when the printing press was adopted in the fifteenth century. Consequently, there are far more characters that have to be type-set in Arabic than there are letters in the alphabet. Letters are differently shaped depending on how they are placed in a word. The number of characters is further increased in books for children and new literates, which necessarily must use additional short vowels. A certain size of type and letter design must be used if printed Arabic is to be easily readable, which increases composition work and subsequently increases production costs. Mechanical or automatic composition necessitates the use of extremely costly machinery, and the composition of classical Arabic in particular presents engineering and aesthetic difficulties. There are a certain number of large modern printing works in various Arab countries, but many are outdated, their equipment is inadequate, ill-assorted, and as a general rule, only capable of limited production. It was pointed out by several participants that this problem of simplifying Arabic so as to print it more easily has been studied for many years, and that new recent proposals by certain linguistic scholars may provide satisfactory solutions. It was recommended that this problem be studied in detail, perhaps in a conference, by experts with time to study it in depth. Both the League of Arab States and the proposed book development centre were suggested as possible sponsoring bodies to undertake this work, which would continue and/or update previous studies on this subject.

Secondly, the introduction of foreign words and technical terms into Arabic also poses certain problems, but the additional letters approved by Arab Academy language scholars are intended to facilitate the incorporation of these words into written Arabic.

Thirdly, the use of vernacular Arabic in books, as opposed to classical Arabic, damages the Arabic language and impedes the flow of books between Arab countries. .

Fourthly, the Arab countries have an ancient cultural tradition and a relatively active intellectual life, but the low level of economic development and the illiteracy of a large part of the population are major hindrances to the development of the book industry.

Fifthly, there are several categories of book producers in the Arab States (governmental institutions and printers, private publishers, etc.).

Sixthly, the lack of information and unavailable statistics make it difficult to ascertain the exact situation of books in the Arab countries. The figures provided by the Unesco Secretariat in its working paper for the Meeting were based on the meagre information available. The statistical

services in the Arab countries need to be improved, especially with regard to standardization and definition of criteria, in order to provide more precise information on book publishing, both in general and in detail.

Seventhly, of the information available, it can be concluded that book production in the Arab States is characterized by its irregularity, imbalance and inadequacy. Except in Egypt, where production is reasonably stable, there are considerable variations in book production from year to year, due in part to a lack of overall long-term planning. There is a marked disparity in the production of the different countries, with much of the printing and publishing of books in Arabic for the region being done either in Beirut or in Cairo.

Eighthly, highly tentative and approximate statistics noted by the experts indicated that there is also an imbalance in each country for the types of books published. Generally speaking, it has been estimated by some specialists that distribution of production according to the major categories reveals the following percentages for the largest groups: social sciences: 24%; literature: 20.5%; religion: 11.5%; history: 11%; applied sciences: 10%; generalities: 6.5%; philology: 6%; pure sciences: 5.5%; arts: 2.5% and philosophy: 2.5%. Two comments can be made from these percentages: (a) the important place occupied by religion (11.5%). This reflects the special nature of the Arab culture; in most countries with large book production, religion accounts for only 2.5% of book production; (b) it is considered by some that in a balanced system of production, literature, the social sciences and the pure and applied sciences should form three roughly equal groups, each accounting for a little over 20% of the total production. In the case of the Arab countries, this percentage is attained in the case of literature and the social sciences, but pure and applied sciences account for only 10% and 5.5% respectively. With all the practical problems connected with the increased rate of development in the Arab countries, the lack of scientific books, as well as technical and scientific journals, would seem to be an important problem that merits the special concern of those responsible for the Arab publishing industry.

Ninthly, the Meeting noted that, in general, book production in the Arab countries is devoted to approximately 75% for educational books and 25% for general books, although costs for both groups are about equal. It was suggested that by 1980, this imbalance should be more nearly equated to 50%-50%.

Tenthly, as for the lack of books in pure and applied sciences for the Arab countries, the Meeting was of the opinion that these books appeal to a limited reading public, and thus constitute, generally, a small commercial market which has little relative interest to private publishers. It was suggested that the Arab governments should assume responsibility for these books and play a greater rôle in helping both the writers and printers to produce these types of books.

B. Analysis of needs

22. The Meeting distinguished three different types of books, around which it centres its discussions: (a) school and university textbooks; (b) children's books; (c) books for general reading for both adults and particularly new literates.

1. School and university textbooks

23. In the Arab world, the rate of school and university enrolment is increasing very rapidly and is expected to double during the next decade. The prescription, approval, printing and distribution of school textbooks are generally centralized within the ministries of education in the Arab countries. Production of textbooks, which is handled by governmental bodies is presently proportionate to needs, but given the rapidly increasing enrolments, it reflects certain short-term emergency measures to meet demands which cannot be maintained indefinitely, and must be put on a permanent stable basis by systematic planning. Printing according to yearly needs as is presently done is only a partially satisfactory immediate solution.

24. The Meeting agreed that textbooks form an integral part of curriculum, teaching methods, and teacher training. Curricula revision and introduction of new teaching methods must also be reflected in textbook evaluation and revision. New textbooks must be used in teacher-training institutes so that new teachers will be familiar with the texts. It also agreed that the format of textbooks in general in the Arab States is poor, and needs to be seriously improved in order to attract students and interest them in learning the contents. In those countries where students may

keep their texts, these books are generally set aside after the course examinations have been successfully passed and not utilized again. It was felt that now, more attractive books with bright colours, photographs and interestingly written contents would make these books more fully used both in and out of school. Teaching aids used by some countries provide useful supplementary materials, but their quantity is not precisely known.

25. Several participants noted that the largest reading public in the Arab countries are young people and students between 17-27 years of age, and that 90% of those who use public libraries are under 25 years of age. Consequently, book publishing should not be based only on supply and demand, but also on the needs of this group in particular terms of national and individual development.

26. The discussion revealed that there exists in the Arab countries a general trend which takes account of the cultural and environmental factors of each country, towards standardization and unification of school textbooks curricula, especially as regards textbooks for primary level. It was pointed out that a series of uniform textbooks could be developed for the Arab countries such as the master texts in science developed by the League of Arab States.

27. Lastly, it was noted that technical and professional training books, especially in specialized fields, are available in only very limited quantities in the Arab countries. There is a very great need for these books.

2. Children's books

28. The population of children under 15 years of age in the Arab countries in 1970 was about 54 million or approximately 45% of the total population, with an annual growth rate of over 3%. Approximately 40% of school-age children in the Arab countries as a whole were attending school at primary or secondary level, with wide variations from one country to another. A small fraction (about 200,000) of pre-school-age children were attending pre-primary schools. Based on these figures, rough estimates would indicate that there are about 32 million juvenile readers in the Arab countries between the age of 5 to 14 (considering that a child of 5, a pre-school age, can be given an illustrated book). This figure is rising steadily, due to both increased school enrolments and the general population growth rate.

29. The Meeting agreed that publication of children's books is vastly inferior to actual needs. Children's books are indispensable in establishing the reading habit, and exert an important indirect educational influence. This type of publication has been largely ignored until only recently. As with the case of textbooks, both format and colours need to be improved in children's books; imported children's books are often not suitable or badly adapted in translation. There is a need for children's authors. There are no Arab publishing houses nor Arab book studies which deal exclusively with children's books.

30. The participants discussed some of the present efforts to remedy this situation. Some of the Arab governments provide children's publications other than textbooks and provide an annual index of these books and publications. Others have initiated schemes to write children's books.

31. However, it was pointed out that there is currently no sufficient effort to plan and organize the scientific preparation and production of children's books in the Arab countries, which the Meeting agreed should be done. It was recommended that the League of Arab States or another body for the Arab countries develop a master plan for the production of children's books.

3. Books for general reading

32. Books for general reading include those intended for educated, cultured adult readers as well as educational books for new literates. According to available statistics, the literate adult population in Arab countries in 1970 was approximately 18 million, but this figure is increasing as more adult literacy campaigns are held and new generations of children who have been to school reach adulthood.

33. The Meeting considered that the present production of books for general reading is both inadequate for short-term and long-term needs. Furthermore, the types of books published for general reading are imbalanced in relation to textbooks published in spite of efforts by certain Arab governments to publish books for new literates and for adult use in life-long education. The Meeting

noted the efforts made by the Regional Centre for Functional Literacy in Rural Areas for the Arab States (ASFEC) to produce and promote reading materials for new literates in the Arab States.

34. Finally, in concluding this section, the Meeting recommended that the needs up to 1980 for all three of these above categories: textbooks, children's books and books for general reading, should be carefully ascertained, in order to allow planning and production relevant to these needs. It was suggested that either the League of Arab States or the proposed book development centre be entrusted with this task.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BOOK PRODUCTION

35. The Meeting noted from the Secretariat paper that striking advances in printing, publishing and distribution techniques have made it possible to produce low-priced, good quality books on a vast scale. This phenomenon, characterized particularly by the rise of the paperback, has assumed the proportions of a "book revolution". However, for most of the countries of the Arab region, the book revolution is still in the making.

36. The number of books produced each year for all the countries of the region combined is estimated at fifty million copies. These are divided among some five thousand titles. Such regional totals, of course, do not take account of the considerable disparity between the production of different countries, and the concentration of the book industry in a number of centres which attract manuscripts from all over the region.

37. The Meeting also noted from the Secretariat paper comparisons made for the Arab region in relation to other parts of the world. The 5,000 titles produced by the region represent barely one per cent and its 50 million copies an even smaller fraction of world output. As to titles, the annual production of the Arab countries comes to about 40 titles for every million inhabitants, compared with the world rate of 140 and as much as 490 for Europe. As to the number of copies, the production average for the Arab region is less than half of one copy per inhabitant while the world rate is 2.3 and in developed countries reaches as high as 7 copies per person.

38. On the basis of these estimates, participants observed that the gap is less wide as to the number of titles than as to the number of copies produced. The conclusion drawn was that the more sizeable number of titles reflects the ancient cultural tradition and active intellectual life of the Arab world while the meagre production results from economic difficulties impeding the establishment of strong national publishing industries.

39. Even so far as titles are concerned, however, it was noted that while two out of every three books published are school textbooks, the kinds of books produced were not always in accordance with social and economic needs. For example, as noted earlier, pure and applied sciences together accounted for some 15 per cent of total output - less than 500 titles per year - while in some of the advanced countries such scientific and technical books constituted as much as 50 per cent of book publishing. This imbalance has been accentuated in some countries by the difficulty in obtaining access to copyrighted works published abroad whether for adaptation, translation or reproduction.

A. Intellectual production

1. Status of writers

40. The Meeting stressed the importance of authors' and publishers' rights as an essential instrument for genuine book development. It was pointed out that only some countries already possess internal copyright legislation. A special effort should be made to introduce legislation of this type throughout the region. It was noted, however, that in several cases this legislation is out of date and in need of revision. The lack of adequate legal protection places authors in an unfavourable situation and thus constitutes a major difficulty for the cultural development of the region.

41. One expert observed that it was difficult in existing circumstances for an author writing in Arabic to live solely on his literary earnings. A number of other experts referred to the difficult situation of Arab authors.

42. The Meeting considered the problem of reproductions and translations carried out without prior authorization. It was felt that it would be necessary for the Arab countries to accede to the international copyright conventions, inasmuch as these now took account of the interests of developing countries. Without waiting for governments to adopt a position regarding their accession to the international copyright conventions, there is an urgent need to ensure the protection of authors within each individual country. Consideration might be given to joint action by the Arab countries on this point with a view to the establishment of common rules.

43. In order to uphold the interests of authors - and in particular to encourage young creative talent - within the framework of the various national legislations, it was recommended that writers' unions should be established, which would seek to ensure that copyright legislation was adopted promptly and that once adopted it did not remain a dead letter. It would be desirable for governments to give their support to such unions.

44. It was also felt that publishers and writers could help to promote and encourage literary creation. Such encouragement is particularly important for young writers and for the authors of books for children and young people.

45. Some experts suggested that competitions with substantial prizes might be organized for the purpose of encouraging literary creation in the Arabic language. The cultural homogeneity and linguistic unity of the area should permit effective regional action.

46. The Meeting further noted the importance of copyright deposit and expressed the wish that the Arab countries should adopt a systematic procedure with respect to it. It was pointed out that many small undertakings publish works which are not deposited, with the result that Arab bibliographies remain incomplete.

47. Thought should also be given to the status and training of translators. The Meeting hoped that Unesco would be able to help the countries of the region in this respect. Such assistance should consist in the establishment of international regulations governing the status of translators, and in training and standardization activities, especially in connexion with translation into Arabic.

2. Translations

48. The Meeting noted an imbalance between translation from and into Arabic, and called for a special effort to encourage the translation of works written in Arabic into other languages. There too, concerted action would be desirable, since it would enable the international community to acquire a better knowledge of Arab culture. The Meeting expressed the strong hope that Unesco would take up this question with a view to increasing the number of translations of works written in Arabic.

49. The establishment of a regional body for the promotion of translations from Arabic might also be considered. The first task would be to draw up a list of works in Arabic likely to be of interest to publishers in other linguistic regions. The list should be accompanied by summaries of the works and full information regarding both these and their authors, and should be widely disseminated outside the region.

50. As regards translations into Arabic, in view of the size of the Arab book market, which at present offers only restricted possibilities, and taking into account the linguistic unity of the region, co-ordination seems called for to avoid dispersal of efforts.

51. The first step would be to draw up a list of priorities in each field, starting with school and university textbooks and works on science and technology. One expert thought that as translations into Arabic of scientific and technical works were not very profitable from an economic point of view, Arab governments should provide financial assistance for their publication.

52. Pending the entry into force of uniform copyright legislation or the accession of all the countries of the region to an international convention, agreements might be concluded among Arab publishers guaranteeing respect for the rights attaching to translations into Arabic.

53. Stress was laid on the efforts that would be needed to ensure the unification and standardization of terminology, specially with regard to the translation of scientific and technical works. To this end, it would be desirable to publish dictionaries that could be used in all Arab countries.

B. Material production

1. Publishing

54. Turning to the physical aspect of book production, the Meeting noted the close interrelationship between problems concerning intellectual and material production which cannot, therefore, be treated entirely apart from one another.

55. The experts were of the opinion that efforts to improve and develop intellectual as well as material production should take as their point of departure the relatively large number of literates in the region estimated, in 1970, at about 33 million - 18 million adults and 15 million children. This represented a potential sizeable market for book industries in the countries of the region. The disparity between marked demand and actual production became even more apparent when taking into account the statistics of book production for the Arab region in relation to other parts of the world.

56. The experts recalled that two out of three books published in the Arab region were school textbooks. While recognizing the continuing need for developing production of educational books, the Meeting emphasized the increasing importance of books for general readership, particularly for new literates. General books were vital to maintain and to develop readership among new readers and to prevent a lapse into illiteracy. It was necessary to arrive at a proper balance between textbooks and general books. In the long run the volume of production of books for general reading should not be less than that of textbooks.

57. A number of speakers suggested co-publication arrangements among a group of countries of the region as one way of tackling the shortage of books in countries with too small a population to support a strong national book industry. The use of a common language could enable attractive books to be published co-operatively by a number of countries for a larger market. Co-publication of books in large editions would permit a lower sales price.

58. One speaker pointed out that the establishment of a central publishing house for the Arab States was advisable for the publication of low-priced books of good quality. Standards of quality, he noted, were not always observed by private publishers.

59. An extensive and lively discussion centred on the publishing profession. A great number of experts urged that governments should establish regulations to define the publishing profession and determine qualifications required of publishers, and should enforce adherence to such regulations. In some countries, it was found that publishing was not governed by any regulations. No qualifications were required of publishers other than that of being a national of the country and having the requisite financial backing.

60. The Meeting was unanimously of the opinion that publishers hold high cultural and educational responsibilities in society. They felt, therefore, that the profession should be open only to those persons who could be relied upon to adhere to both the professional and ethical standards required. One expert reported that in his country anyone wishing to become a publisher had to apply to an economic and cultural committee which examined his financial and professional qualifications. The ministries of culture and information were represented on the committee. Experts from two other countries reported that laws governing the qualifications required of publishers already existed. The Meeting further agreed that governments should not only determine the financial, economic and professional qualifications for admission to the profession, but that they should furthermore ensure that publishing is taken into account in each country's overall national planning and policy.

61. The Meeting also considered the problem of the lack of systematic information regarding the existence of publishing houses in the Arab world. It was suggested that there should be a Unesco bulletin giving a complete list of these publishing houses. The rôle of public and private publishing was a further point of discussion. It was felt that educational publishing would remain the chief responsibility of the public publishing sector whereas private publishing would be mainly concentrated on books for general reading. However, the extent to which private publishing could

operate varied from country to country according to government policy. In any event, the distribution of work between the two sectors needed careful planning and clear formulation.

62. Several experts were emphatic in pointing out that the great responsibility which rested with publishers was shared equally by authors. They claimed that the publishers' responsibility included the protection of authors' rights and stated also that good books required close co-operation and smooth relations between authors and publishers.

63. There was a discussion of the problem of publishers' rights in relation to freedom of expression. Some claimed that this right had to be protected and wanted the responsibility of publishing to rest entirely with the publisher. One expert argued that the damage that could be done by irresponsible publishers presented too great a risk and that, publishing should, therefore, be subject to government control.

64. The meeting next took up the organization of the publishing profession. There was general agreement on the need for the formation of professional associations of publishers in all countries where they did not already exist. These associations were needed as instruments to observe and to enforce a code of ethical conduct among their members and to safeguard their professional standards. Further, since the development of book publishing calls for concerted action and regional co-operation, the experts felt that such action might best be pursued by the strengthening of national professional associations. Such associations could lead in due course to the setting-up of national book development councils broadly representative of the book community. The Arab Publishers' Union, it was learned, provided an opportunity for regional co-operation not only for publishers' associations but also for individual members of both the public and the private publishing sectors.

2. Printing

65. A number of speakers referred to the need for simplification of the Arabic alphabet and standardization of type faces for printing requirements. On this question the experts had before them a document prepared by an expert from Morocco. After studying the problems of printing in Arabic and taking note of the research carried out on this subject by Professor Lakhdar (Morocco) and of his conclusions regarding the possibility of simplification through limiting the number of characters in accordance with international practice, the experts noted the importance of these suggestions, which the Moroccan Government has adopted and is putting into practice. They recommended that the attention of Unesco should be drawn to the project and that it should be communicated to the governments of all Arab countries to enable them acquaint themselves with it and take appropriate action.

66. One expert drew attention to the current lack of uniformity in Arab countries with regard to the use of numerals, "Indian" numerals being used in the Eastern countries, and "Arabic" numerals in the Maghreb.

67. One speaker discussed the effect on the calculation of book prices of the cost of printing equipment and of its maintenance. He emphasized that the adaptation of printing technology in the Arab world to the standards of developed countries was an absolute necessity. In particular, he advised the application of capital intensive technology and labour intensive technology to reduce costs. As to equipment, he stated that the best machines would also be the most profitable ones in the long run, notwithstanding the large capital investment required. The same expert requested the exemption of newsprint from the different taxes when used for the printing of books, as the use of newsprint would lower book production costs considerably.

68. A different point was made by another speaker who said that the production of books for the blind should constitute a challenge to Arab printers and that the techniques for this type of production should be more fully developed.

69. The urgency of training of personnel in all areas of the publishing profession was emphasized by many experts. They laid particular stress on the need for training in every sector of the printing industry. This was a problem which lent itself to regional solutions by means of regional training courses. Several experts urged that Unesco itself provide funds for the holding of such courses.

70. Some experts suggested the establishment of more printing schools on the lines of the Ecole du Livre in Morocco. Such institutions should also provide training for students from other countries of the region. A number of experts referred to the invaluable work that might be carried out in this respect by a regional book development centre for the Arab States.

3. The Paper Problem

71. The question of paper supply was introduced by the representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) who presented the document (COM-72/CONF. 9/4) prepared by FAO on "Cultural Papers in the Arab Countries - the Possibilities of Increased Local Production".

72. It was noted that, in 1970, the per capita consumption of paper board in the sixteen countries of the region varied from about 0.8 kg. (in the Arab Republic of Yemen) to 27 kg. (in the Lebanon), with an average of about 5 1/2 kg. These figures compared with an average consumption of 10 kg. in Africa (including South Africa) and a world average of 32 kg. Out of this total, the per capita newsprint consumption varied from 0.02 (in Algeria) to 1.9 kg. (in the Lebanon), averaging 0.3 kg. as compared with 0.19 kg. in Africa and 5.3 kg. in the world.

73. The average per capita consumption of printing and writing paper in the region, which is relevant to book publishing, was 0.9 kg. ranging from 0.3 kg. (in the Sudan) to 11.5 kg. (in Kuwait). The corresponding figures are 0.4 kg. for Africa and 6.3 kg. in the world.

74. The meeting noted further, that out of the total requirements in 1969, of printing and writing paper of 107,000 metric tons, 57 per cent (61,000 tons) at a value of $14.3 million was imported. The balance of 43 per cent was produced locally mainly in the more populous countries like Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

75. Furthermore, a considerable amount of paper totalling 60,300 tons at a value of $56.7 millions was imported in the form of paper articles and printed matter.

76. The meeting noted that the total consumption of cultural papers in the Arab countries in 1969 - including printing and writing papers and newsprint - as well as paper articles and printed matter, amounted to 234,000 tons, of which 158,000 tons were imported at a value of $77 million. The total consumption is expected to double to 475,000 tons by 1980.

77. The meeting noted that as a result of the doubling by 1980 of domestic paper consumption the expansion of existing mills and the establishment of several new and viable pulp and paper mills during the present decade would be required, whose production would be based on local raw materials including one or two newsprint mills.

78. Noting the considerable amount of foreign exchange required for paper imports, the experts were of the opinion that everything possible should be done to increase local paper production. They felt, that action in this regard required a concerted, region-wide approach, as paper needs existed in all countries, whereas at present mills could only be established and suitable raw material grown in some of them for certain technical market and climatic reasons.

79. As preparatory steps for the establishment of new pulp and paper mills, the experts suggested the conducting of a series of surveys which may be undertaken by Unesco and/or other specialized agencies. The meeting noted with gratitude the readiness of the ECA/FAO Forest Industries Advisory Group for Africa at Addis Ababa to collaborate in the implementation of the surveys and to assist in their financing.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BOOK DISTRIBUTION

A. Bookshops and libraries

80. Distribution was considered to be a vital problem. This had emerged from statements made by the experts who recommended the establishment of a complete and efficient book distribution network for the Arab countries.

81. There are not many large, modern, well-organized bookshops in the big towns, and these are only to be found in the city centres. In spite of the fact that there is an old and noble tradition of book selling in Arab countries, it is not fully adapted to present-day conditions. The first need is for modern bookshops with trained staff. The training of booksellers should be given priority, and this could be taken in hand by governments as well as by publishers.

82. The experts urged that the distribution network should be organized so as to reach people living in the most remote and rural areas. It is particularly important that books should also reach the population living in low-income housing areas as well as in villages.

83. With a view to facilitating book distribution on national and regional levels, special attention was paid to the problem of the development of documentation and library systems within Arab countries and co-operation between them. The rôle of the national library as a centre of such systems was stressed. The existence of a national library or another well-organized library acting as a national library based on copyright deposit law is essential for nationwide book development. It was considered that book development planning is impossible without compiling a national bibliography, which should be one of the main functions of national libraries.

84. Considerable attention was devoted to the public and school library networks as effective means of getting books to the readers. Each school and each community in cities, and especially in the vast rural areas, should possess at least one library with qualified staff and adequate book budget. The planning of school and public library networks should be foreseen as an integral part of national educational planning.

85. The meeting recommended that libraries be equipped with full-time librarians and that libraries, including school libraries, be kept open after school classes to allow access to students.

86. Coming to the distribution of scientific, technical and other specialized books, it was noted that this kind of printed material requires adequate documentation services and special libraries. It was recognized that these services should be incorporated in national documentation and library systems. The co-ordination of documentation and library activities within Arab countries and within the whole Arab region is essential for education, including higher education as well as for scholarly requirements and for socio-economic and cultural development.

87. Another equally important aspect was the adequate training of librarians and documentalists. The meeting considered that this task should be carried out at the national level and invited the authorities of Arab countries where strong schools of librarianship already exist to co-operate with those countries which have no such schools.

88. Concluding their examination of documentation and library systems, the participants noted that due attention should be given to the recommendations of meetings convened by Unesco on this subject: a Regional Seminar on Library Development in Arabic-Speaking States (Beirut, 1959) and a Regional Seminar in Bibliography, Documentation and Exchange of Publications in Arabic-Speaking States (Cairo, 1962). Attention should also be given to the recommendations of the two seminars organized by the League of Arab States: the Seminar on Educational Documentation in the Arab States (Cairo, 1968) and the Seminar on Library Services, Bibliography, Documentation, Indexing and Manuscripts (Damascus, 1971). The experts expressed the hope that the forthcoming Unesco Meeting of Experts on National Planning of Documentation and Library Services in the Arab Countries, tentatively to be held in Cairo, in January 1973, would take into account the recommendations of the present meeting.

B. Reading habits

89. The experts agreed that the reading public in Arab countries is limited by the high rate of illiteracy and the paucity of means. Despite efforts to modernize education, teaching in Arab schools was criticized by some experts as being too rigid and not designed to arouse in the child a desire for independent reading. The school, like the home, is therefore the key to the acquisition of the reading habit, and educational research on this subject is a requirement in the Arab countries.

90. It was noted that the same important rôle in promotion of the skill of reading should be played by libraries, especially by public and school libraries. In this connexion the experts stressed that a well-organized system of libraries with reading rooms facilities and loan services, including inter-library loan services, would be the best way of introducing books to people at all levels of society and fostering a love of reading.

91. Systematic research on methods of motivating reading should be undertaken with the participation of librarians, psychologists, educators and readers themselves. Special attention must be paid to child readers. In the light of these studies it should be possible to evolve long-term book policies based on careful planning: in particular, methodical action could be taken to ensure that books are integrated into the powerful networks of audio-visual media now being established in the Arab countries: radio broadcasting and television on the one hand, and books on the other, for example, are complementary instruments in education.

92. The Tunisian expert informed the meeting of the research undertaken in his country on the subject of literary and scientific reading motivation. He stressed the importance of a methodological approach allowing children and young people, both in an out of school, to learn how to assume responsibility for their own reading and for that of others, the act of reading being regarded as inseparable from the communication and learning processes. Reading motivation based on audio-visual methods treats reading as an act embracing the desire to read, physical access to books and a variety of follow-up activities carried out either individually or - more importantly - in groups (surveys, social research, literary research, etc..). His country's experience also highlighted the importance of associating teachers with research and experimentation (inculcating awareness of problems of book production and a knowledge of readers' attitudes). The Tunisian research unit had also gone into the question of training children and young people for book production, and suitable methods were currently being tested.

IV. PROMOTION OF THE FLOW OF BOOKS WITHIN AND TO AND FROM THE REGION

A. Regional distribution

93. The distribution of books between the various countries of the Arab region was the subject of lively discussions during the meeting. The common language allowed of large-scale regional exchanges in the Arab world, but that intra-regional trade had not, in fact, developed as it should. Instances were mentioned of leading Arab authors who had been obliged to seek publishers abroad, which meant that their works were only available in their own and other Arab countries as imported books. A tendency towards regional co-operation was, however, perceptible in the Arab world, which could be extended to book development. Regional organizations should be an effective force in the development of the book industry and of regional distribution through the adoption of regional measures.

94. The lack of statistics made it very difficult to find what was the situation, even approximate, of the distribution of books within the Arab region. It was, therefore, of prime importance that all the Arab countries should strive to establish information on this subject. In this connexion, it was recognized that well prepared and regularly updated statistical data and bibliographies were vital needs for efficient book production and distribution systems.

95. The relations between publishers and booksellers drew the attention of the experts. It was suggested that in order to develop better regional distribution, further efforts should be made by national publishers to distribute their books directly to countries outside their own; and for the publishers also to exchange their books among themselves for distribution.

96. It was noted that nearly all the books published in the Arab world being in Arabic, the book trade was essentially regional but that production being concentrated in two or three centres, exchanges between all Arab countries were rather scarce. On the other hand, although there are maritime and overland routes in the region, the flow of traffic along these routes was not as frequent, regular and organized as was desirable. Air transport was being, therefore, increasingly used. It was however handicapped by high airfreight rates. It was hoped that national airline companies of the Arab countries would offer special rates for books.

97. A number of economic factors had impeded the development of the book trade between Arab countries. Import duties, foreign exchange controls, import quotas, licensing systems and special taxes were among the obstacles. In this connexion, it was noted that only four countries of the region were among the 64 States that had acceded to the Unesco Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Material, which provides for the waiving of customs duties on books and for the grant of foreign exchange for the importation of books intended for public libraries.

98. The experts noted that at its March 1971 Conference, the Arab Postal Union had decided to consider the whole Arab world as a single postal unit, making internal rates apply to letters and parcels sent from one Arab country to another. It was considered that this step should facilitate intra-regional postal services but that its effects will be limited if the internal rates were too high. The meeting therefore suggested that postal administrations should undertake negotiations in order to agree on a standard rate for book postage, which would be low enough for all the Arab countries.

99. The experts further suggested the diminution of duties and licences, and the freeing of book payments from currency restrictions. Other suggestions included uniform book prices in the region.

B. International Trade

100. The meeting discussed the question of imports of foreign books into the Arab region. The lack of statistics concerning the importation of foreign books made it difficult to know exactly to what extent domestic production of books in the Arab countries was supplemented by books from abroad. For this reason, the documents prepared for the meeting did not show which countries outside the region were the suppliers to the Arab countries and to what extent. It could be assumed, however, that the fact, noted earlier, that Arabic was not well known outside the region, made it difficult to create favourable conditions for the flow of books from the region. There was, therefore, a very small Arab export market and most of the countries of the region had balance of payment deficits with regard to books. In this connexion, it was considered that foreign books, scientific and technical publications in particular, were still, apparently, of great importance for the Arab countries.

101. The view was expressed that a new effort should be made to encourage accession of the countries of the region to the Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Material. There should also be a renewed initiative to encourage Arab States to become parties to the other agreements and arrangements concluded under Unesco auspices, namely: the Universal Copyright Convention, the Convention concerning the Exchange of Official Publications and Government Documents between States and Unesco's international gift coupon scheme.

102. Unesco should also continue its action, in conjunction with the Universal Postal Union and the Arab Postal Union, to arrange for postal rates for books to be lowered as much as possible and for books to be granted maximum facilities. The question of postal charges was linked with other transportation charges. Since books were more often transported by air, the cost of transportation was an important factor in distribution. The meeting was informed that Unesco was planning to submit proposals for lowered air freight rates for books to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

103. Chronic currency instability made exchanges difficult. In addition to this, many countries had imposed foreign currency controls which inhibited trade in books. While Unesco coupons could help in the purchase of books, they were limited in quantity by the extent of Unesco's hard currency reserves. The question of the availability of currency for the purchase of books, particularly scientific and technical publications, was important. Consequently, the experts welcomed the approach made by Unesco to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the finding of solutions to the problem of shortages of currency for the purchase of books. Unesco intended to make similar approaches to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) for the reduction of tariffs not only on books but also on the materials needed for book manufacture.

PART TWO

INTERNATIONAL BOOK YEAR 1972 - THE CHARTER OF THE BOOK

104. The representative of the Director-General, introducing International Book Year, reported that more than 100 countries had drawn up national plans for the Year. It was already evident that Book Year had captured public interest and that it was catching hold all over the world. Official reports on national plans for International Book Year had been received from a number of Arab countries. The representative of the Director-General invited supplementary information from the participants.

105. In the ensuing discussion several experts reported to the meeting on national plans for International Book Year. Observers from the League of Arab States, the Arab Publishers' Association and ASFEC also reported on International Book Year activities. The speakers were unanimous in voicing support for International Book Year. They described a wide range of activities being carried out including special book fairs and exhibits, meetings, literary prizes, library promotion schemes and publicity campaigns through the mass media. The expert from Tunisia informed the meeting that a conference on books and readings in the Maghreb will take place in Tunis in October 1972, within the framework of International Book Year.

106. The representative of the Director-General observed that the discussion testified to the comprehensive and practical nature of International Book Year plans in the Arab States. He invited all the participants to communicate to Unesco officially the plans on which they had reported so that they could be taken into account in the summary being submitted to the General Conference.

107. The meeting considered the Charter of the Book which had been adopted by the Support Committee for International Book Year - a 14-member group widely representative of the international book community. The Charter was introduced by the representative of the Director-General who reviewed its ten articles.

108. Every speaker taking part in the discussion expressed support for the Charter. Plans were described for bringing the Charter to the attention of a wide public. The Secretary-General of the Arab Publishers Association announced his Organization's endorsement of the Charter. All those present unanimously approved the Charter of the Book.

PART THREE

PROPOSED ARAB REGIONAL CENTRE FOR BOOK DEVELOPMENT

109. Consideration of this question was based on the document submitted by the Egyptian Government, entitled "Preliminary project for a Regional Book Centre in the Arab Countries" (COM-72/CONF. 9/5).

110. The preliminary project was introduced by Mr. Abdel-Moneim El-Sawi from the Arab Republic of Egypt who recalled that the General Egyptian Book Organization of the Ministry of Culture and Information and other authorities of the Egyptian Government have drawn up this proposal in consultation with Unesco. The establishment in an Arab country of a regional centre, he stated, constituted an important means of promoting book development for the whole region. The Egyptian Government, as set forth in the above-mentioned document, offered that Cairo be the headquarters for the proposed centre and was prepared to contribute towards the establishment and upkeep of the centre by providing it with premises and equipment and partly financing its operational costs. This contribution included land, administrative buildings and premises as well as grants for the training of staff in the various aspects of book production and distribution and for the financing of certain operational costs. The centre would be sponsored by the General Egyptian Book Organization of the Ministry of Culture and Information. The location suggested was part of the new building of the Organization in which the present meeting of experts had been held and which is a compound comprising the National Library, the National Archives and scientific centres as well as the publishing house. The space allocated to the suggested centre amounted to 1,720 square metres for offices, work rooms and two large conference and library halls. The centre would have access to the existing modern technical facilities owned by the Organization. Total allocations in existing land, buildings and machinery amounted to some $1,000,000. Details of the operating costs involved for the centre could be determined only after the project had been finalized. It was at that point that the Egyptian Government would indicate those operating expenses for which it would make itself responsible.

111. Following this presentation by the expert from Egypt there was a wide-ranging and constructive discussion on the proposed project. The need for the establishment of a regional book centre to initiate, co-ordinate and promote book programmes was stressed by all who participated in the discussion. The experts expressed great appreciation for the generous offer made by the Egyptian Government that Cairo be the headquarters for the proposed centre.

112. The discussion took account of the fact that there is an uneven level of development of book publishing and the distribution of books in the countries of the region. Countries might be grouped broadly into three categories:

(i) Those possessing a substantial book trade and industry;

(ii) Those where the book industry is beginning to develop and where the potential resources hold the promise of emergence of a large book trade;

(iii) Those countries where the infrastructure of book publishing and distribution has yet to be developed.

113. In all three cases, the centre could be a highly effective means of finding collective solutions for the varied and complex problems of book development in the region. The centre could help to increase the production and distribution of books and, in so doing, promote the intellectual, economic and social advancement of the Arab countries.

114. In the discussion, the experts noted with satisfaction that the proposal made by Egypt provided for participation of all countries of the region on an equal basis. The meeting also pointed out the importance of decentralization of the centre's activities. In due course, the centre should establish branches or offices in the member countries. In the meantime, the programme of work of the centre should be shared among the various countries.

115. Many experts indicated the need for action by the centre to promote the Arab book market through contacts with regional institutions and organizations such as the League of Arab States, the Arab Common Market and the Council of Arab Economic Unity. Links should also be established with international bodies such as ECA, FAO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, GATT and other bodies such as ASFEC in a position to contribute to the achievement of the centre's objectives.

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CENTRE

116. The meeting unanimously approved the proposal for the establishment of an Arab Regional Centre for Book Development. Following this approval, several speakers reiterated the primary importance and dynamic rôle attached to the establishment of this centre as a means of promoting book development in the countries of the region.

117. The experts recommended that the headquarters of the Centre should be set up in Cairo, accepting the generous offer of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE CENTRE

118. The meeting reached unanimous agreement on the following objectives for the centre:

(i) enrichment of Arab culture and promotion of exchanges with the rest of the world so as to encourage universal culture, mutual understanding and peace;

(ii) the development and strengthening of the Arab book market, both as to production and distribution;

(iii) providing training for authors and translators especially those engaged in writing for children, as well as technical training for professional staff in the various sectors of book production, marketing and distribution;

(iv) carrying out studies on copyright, and with the help of Unesco as well as other competent bodies, promoting arrangements designed to ensure that copyright should be an inducement to authors without, however, denying the access of Arab peoples to the sources of universal culture;

(v) co-ordination and promotion of surveys as well as the gathering of data, statistics and documents on the book market, with a view to improving the production, distribution and use of printed matter in the Arab countries. In the conduct of these studies, there should be close co-ordination with existing institutions throughout the region;

(vi) arriving at high professional standards for authorship, publishing, printing, and all other aspects of the book industry;

(vii) encouraging and itself carrying out research and studies on reading habits, on the levels and fields of interest of books and on the quality of publications desired, especially those intended for children and youth, and for the life-long education of adults;

(viii) collaboration with the countries of the region in the planning of school and public library services at the national level and in the implementation of these plans in accordance with prevailing social and economic conditions;

(ix) assisting the countries of the region in the training of librarians and administrators of national public and school libraries;

(x) promoting the establishment of national book organizations in the countries of the region including both the public and private sectors;

(xi) carrying out preparation of and helping develop bibliographies and bibliographical research and services encompassing, in particular, scientific and literary works in Arabic as well as English, French and other languages widely used in the Arab countries. Such bibliographical

work should aid at compiling comprehensive lists relevant to the Arab cultural heritage, including ancient manuscripts. Electronic computors should be enlisted for the work as far as possible.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE CENTRE

119. The experts unanimously recommended that the organization and structure of the centre should be studied in detail by the host country and Unesco, taking account of the suggestions of the present meeting. The objective of this study should be the conclusion of a formal agreement between the host country and Unesco establishing the regional centre at Cairo and setting forth provisions for the participation of the countries of the region as well as the organizational arrangements for its operation.

120. The meeting considered that in order for the centre to begin work quickly it would be helpful if the General Egyptian Book Organization could, at the earliest possible date, initiate certain preparatory activities, pending the conclusion of the Agreement with Unesco setting up the centre on a fully regional basis.

IV. FINANCING OF THE CENTRE

121. The experts considered that the generous offer made by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt to provide facilities and partial financing for the centre could be of great help in getting the centre started at an early date.

122. The experts considered that the centre should be financed by the participating countries in accordance with provisions to be agreed upon by them when the project has taken final form.

123. There was agreement among the experts that those regional and international institutions as well as publishing houses, both public and private, interested in the Centre's activities should be invited to consider the possibility of contributing to its financing. It was noted that such assistance should in no way impair the independence and autonomy of the centre and its programme of work.

124. The meeting noted that the Egyptian Government intended to submit to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) a request for financial assistance for the establishment of the Centre. The experts considered it essential that this Egyptian request should be supported by other countries of the region. The meeting strongly urged UNDP to grant assistance to the centre at the earliest possible date.

125. At the conclusion of the discussion, the representative of the Director-General of Unesco conveyed to the participants his congratulations on the unanimity achieved on the proposal for the establishment of an Arab Regional Centre for Book Development, with headquarters in Cairo. He reiterated Unesco's appreciation of the generous offer made by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt to provide the premises and facilities for the centre. Pledging his Organization's full cooperation, he said that the centre could become a vital means of promoting book development in the Arab countries.

PART FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. PLANNING OF BOOK DEVELOPMENT

126. Book development in the Arab countries calls for energetic action in a number of fields. If it is to be really positive, such action must be integrated in a planned context. Hence the essential recommendation that any book development plan should be inserted in the wider framework of national development plans. In this spirit, the meeting recommended that the Arab States, in collaboration with Unesco and other international and regional organizations, should make a special effort to plan book development up to 1980.

127. Particular attention was given to the rôle of books as an essential instrument for post-literacy work. The meeting therefore recommended, on the one hand, an intensification of the fight against illiteracy through post-literacy activities, and, on the other hand, the integration of this effort in book development planning, in terms both of quantity and of quality.

128. Book development invariably entails economic considerations: returns on basic investments, currency problems, importation of materials, transport, various dues and taxes, etc. It is therefore essential that those responsible for book development in each Arab country should take these different factors into account when planning their course of action.

129. Similarly, it is strongly recommended that those responsible for economic planning in each Arab country should give the necessary priority to book development in their country. This approach would make it possible for the first time to establish a genuine book development policy, conceived and planned at the very highest level. The experts recommended that Unesco should assist the Member States of the region in preparing book development plans which could be fitted into the country programming framework established by UNDP.

130. In order to attain the objectives referred to above, it appeared necessary to take immediate action to bring the basic statistical data up to date. It was therefore recommended that each country should proceed to collect, analyze and process the most recently available information in this field and to improve and strengthen the information-processing instruments existing in each of these countries. In many cases, such improvement no doubt requires new investment for the setting up and equipment of specialized bodies. The meeting agreed, however, that, in other cases, a considerable improvement could be brought about by better organization and methodical utilization of the existing bodies. It therefore recommended that immediate action to this end should be undertaken by each country and that Unesco should assist the States of the region in undertaking such action.

131. On a further step toward concerted planning and action in the development of national book industries and with a view to integrating book development planning into over-all national development planning, the meeting urged the establishment in due course of "national book development councils". Such councils should take as their nucleus the existing professional associations which need to be enlarged and extended to all the countries of the region.

132. The meeting strongly recommended that the Arab countries should take full advantage of the cultural homogeneity and linguistic unity of the region, which represent an eminently favourable factor, to plan, rationalize and accelerate the process of book development.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF BOOK PRODUCTION

133. The experts recommended that in countries where it does not exist, internal legislation concerning the protection of copyright should be introduced or that consideration should be given to its introduction. Further, regional consultations should be arranged to study the possibilities of harmonizing such legislation. The wish was also expressed that the Arab States should lend their support to Unesco's efforts for the development in international copyright agreements. In particular, it was considered desirable that the Arab States should accede to the international conventions. The

meeting also raised the question of copyright deposit, and considered that uniform regulations were called for in this field. The League of Arab States and other regional institutions, particularly the future Arab Regional Centre for Book Development, should study ways of ensuring that the practice of copyright deposit is universally and uniformly applied at the earliest possible date.

134. All steps should be taken to encourage young creative talent: competitions, prizes, literary criticism, training. This is particularly important in connexion with the development of the production of children's books. National authorities have a responsibility in this field, but publishing houses and professional organizations are equally concerned in the matter and they should make a full contribution.

135. The meeting recommended that co-ordinated action, at regional and international level should be taken to encourage the translation of Arabic books into other languages. Unesco could play a part in promoting and co-ordinating these endeavours.

136. With regard to translation into Arabic, the meeting recommended that the experts of the region should establish technical standards as soon as possible, especially in the matter of terminology. This would make it possible to avoid duplication of effort on the one hand and discrepancies in terminology on the other hand. Consideration might also be given to the drawing up of translation programmes, to be carried out jointly by a number of States. The Arab States should give tangible assistance to research groups working on the standardization of terminology - above all necessary in the scientific and technical field - which accounts for the bulk of translations and in which, failing co-ordination, the most serious discrepencies can arise. International organizations, and in particular Unesco, should assist the States of the region. The League of Arab States, which has already carried out work in this field, should be associated with the research in question, as should the Arab Regional Centre for Book Development referred to below, the Co-ordinating Centre of Arab National Commissions for Unesco at Rabat, ASFEC and other Arab regional bodies.

137. The meeting recommended that particular attention should be paid to the quality of textbooks, which, especially in the case of primary education, must draw their inspiration from the pupil's immediate environment. It would be desirable for textbooks requirements to be calculated as far ahead as 1980 and for production to be planned accordingly. The Arab Regional Centre for Book Development might undertake this task.

138. The meeting noted at the same time that the present breakdown of production (75% textbooks and 25% books for general reading) lacks proper balance. An effort should be made to bring the two sectors into equilibrium (i.e. 50% each) by 1980 in order to meet the region's requirements in respect of general books. The average reader in the region being comparatively young (surveys indicate that the vast majority of active readers are between 8 and 27 years of age) it is important that this fact should be taken into consideration in the production of general books. In particular, the preparation and production of books for children in the Arab countries should be scientifically organized.

139. The experts recognized the importance of low-priced books for the new reading masses. On an effective means of arriving at the lowest possible prices, it was suggested suitable books should be published co-operatively. Such co-publication arrangements could also help to enlist less populous countries which cannot support a viable book industry.

140. The establishment of associations for all book professions was strongly recommended by the experts. In countries where they already exist they should be strengthened. Such associations were needed to maintain professional standards and to promote concerted action in all aspects of the book trade.

141. The experts considered that a co-operative regional effort was required for training of personnel. The acute manpower shortage called for training facilities for writers, translators, publishers, book designers, booksellers, librarians, documentalists and printers. The meeting, therefore, recommended that priority should be given to the training of such staff by both governments and publishers. Unesco should continue to pay special attention to the training of manpower for book development, especially at higher or medium level, it being understood that the preliminary training will have to be provided by national institutions.

142. In order to arrive at a uniform Arabic alphabet for printing purposes, the experts recommended the carrying out of a region-wide survey based on the very considerable work that had already been done in a number of Arab countries, particularly that conducted in Morocco.

143. The meeting noted that more pulp and paper were needed so as to reduce the present dependence on paper imports, with the considerable expenditure of foreign exchange involved. Accordingly, the FAO and the Economic Commission for Africa were invited to carry out surveys on the following:

(i) A comparative study on fibrous raw material available in the region;

(ii) the possible establishment of more industrial pulpwood forest plantations;

(iii) an investigation into requirements for the establishment of industrial forest plantations and their manpower requirements;

(iv) an appraisal of the possibility of establishing new newsprint mills;

(v) a market survey on cultural papers, paper articles and printed matter in order to determine the possibilities of establishing new pulp and paper mills as well as paper-converting plants for printing, publishing and stationery.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF BOOK DISTRIBUTION

144. The experts recommended that the existing networks of bookshops and other points of sale should be expanded to cover all urban districts, including suburbs, as well as rural areas. Distribution might be further extended by the use of such means as mobile libraries.

145. In the over-all plans established for book development in Arab countries, top priority should be given to the expansion of libraries in general, but with particular emphasis on school and public libraries, so as to develop both reading and the acquisition of the reading habit. Library planning should be considered as forming part of educational planning as a whole. The rôle of national libraries was emphasized in this connexion. These libraries, if they are well organized and enjoy the benefit of copyright deposit, can constitute centres from which the influence of books can spread not only over a given country but throughout the region as a whole.

146. The experts recommended the early establishment by Arab countries of bibliographies which should be regularly brought up to date. It was thought highly desirable that all the countries of the region should have the opportunity of participating jointly in this activity.

147. Studies should be carried out on reading motivation. The methods that can be used to awaken and stimulate the desire to read include the establishment of library services, the organization of book exhibitions and similar events, advertising and the setting up of systems for distributing books at prices accessible to all. The Tunisian experiment mentioned above was also considered with the keenest interest by the meeting.

148. It is absolutely essential that books should be able to circulate as freely as possible if their dissemination and use are to be maximized throughout the region. To this end, it is necessary to eliminate any obstacles impeding the free flow of books and audio-visual material. The necessary steps can be taken at governmental level, but it is also desirable that support should be forthcoming from publishers and from national and regional institutions.

149. It was proposed that those governments of the region that had not acceded to the Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Material should do so without delay. The experts considered that the Unesco Agreement in question was a fundamental instrument for encouraging the free flow of books.

150. The experts also recommended that the Arab countries should reduce customs duties on books. It was suggested that Unesco should propose to the General Agreement on Tarrifs and Trade (GATT) that duties on books and materials intended for book production should be reduced.

151. Furthermore, the meeting recommended that efforts should be made to remedy the lack of foreign currency for the purchase of books by adopting measures which would make it easier to obtain international and regional settlement facilities. The Arab States were invited to support the proposals made by Unesco to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) regarding the conclusion of book purchasing agreements, especially for scientific and technical works Exchange of books between publishers could also be encouraged.

152. The participants noted with satisfaction that Unesco is proposing to submit to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) proposals for a reduction in the air freight tariffs applicable to books. They also agreed that the various Arab airlines should be strongly urged to adopt tariff reductions.

153. With regard to the problem of postal tariffs, the meeting noted that Unesco intends to work out proposals for a reduction in the tariffs applicable to books for submission to the next Congress of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). At the same time the experts proposed that the Arab Postal Union should examine the problem with a view to introducing a preferential tariff for books, thereby making it easier to send books by post within the region.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ARAB REGIONAL CENTRE FOR BOOK DEVELOPMENT

154. The meeting stressed its appreciation of the Egyptian Government's offer to provide the necessary facilities for the installation of the Arab Regional Centre for Book Development and unanimously recommended that the Centre should be established at Cairo.

155. The meeting invited the Egyptian Government and Unesco to enter upon negotiations for the preparation of an Agreement with a view to the establishment of this Centre in which all countires of the region shall be entitled to participate. Pending the signature of this Agreement, the General Egyptian Book Organization was invited to set in motion the regional activities assigned to the Centre.

156. The meeting expressed the hope that the various international institutions, especially the United National Development Programme, will be able to provide the assistance needed for the creation and operation of the Centre. In this connexion, it was noted that the Egyptian Government intended to submit a request for assistance to the United Nations Development Programme; it was recommended that this request should be supported by the other governments of the Arab region,

157. In view of the interest aroused by the creation of the Centre and the part which it could play in book development in the region, the meeting hoped that Unesco will assist the States of the region in the preparatory studies for, and subsequent establishment of, the aforesaid Centre.

158. The meeting unanimously recommended that its Chairman, Dr. Mahmoud El-Sheniti, should visit a number of Arab countries, as a Unesco expert, to secure the advice of these countries. on the initial regional programme of work of the Centre.

159. The participants considered that the results of the activities undertaken by the Arab countries in connexion with International Book Year were most satisfactory. The meeting strongly recommended that the impetus to be given in 1972 should be followed through in subsequent years. The participants expressed their conviction that the present meeting, which occupies a central position in the events marking International Book Year in the Arab States, will have a decisive influence on future developments. They expressed their gratitude to the Egyptian authorities and to Unesco for having organized the meeting. They hoped that Unesco's programme in coming years would take account of the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report.

ANNEX/ANNEXE

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS/LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

I. EXPERTS

ALGERIA/ALGERIE

Kouider AMARA,
Conservateur,
Sous-Directeur de la Documentation,
Ministère de l'Information et de la Culture.

Technical Adviser/Conseiller technique

Mohamed CHIKHI

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT/
REPUBLIQUE ARABE D'EGYPTE

S. Mahmoud EL-SHENITI,
Chairman,
General Egyptian Book Organization,
Ministry of Culture and Information.

Technical Adviser/Conseiller technique

Salib BOTROS,
Technical Adviser for Publishing,
Visiting Professor,
Faculty of Information.

Abdel-Moneim EL SAWI,
Director,
Publications Centre,
Egyptian National Commission for Unesco.

Mahmoud Abdel-Moneim MOURAD,
President,
Publishers Association of Egypt and
Secretary-General,
Pan Arab Publishers' Association.

IRAQ/IRAK

Abdel Amir AL-MU'ALLA
Ministry of Information

Technical Adviser/Conseiller technique

A. AL-WAILI,
The Iraqi Cultural Attaché,
Cairo.

JORDAN/JORDANIE

Amin Fares MALHAS,
Head,
Educational Documentation and Publications Centre,
Editor of the educational quarterly "Risalat Al-Mu'allem",
Ministry of Education.

KUWAIT/KOWEIT

Ahmad Saad AL JASIR,
Controller,
Textbooks and Curricula,
Ministry of Education.

LEBANON/LIBAN

Bahige OSMAN,
Editeur,
Dar El Ilm Lil-Malayen.

LIBYA/LIBYE

Ali Mohammed EL-DALI,
Deputy Director,
Publications Department,
Ministry of Information.

MOROCCO/MAROC

Mohammed EL FASI,
Président,
Centre de Coordination entre les Commissions nationales arabes pour l'Unesco,
Rabat.

Mohamed WAKILI,
Directeur des bibliothèques, archives et manuscrits,
Ministère de la Culture et de l'Enseignement supérieur, secondaire et originel.

QATAR

Al Asmar Ahmad RAJAB,
Director,
Technical Research Department,
Ministry of Education.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC/
REPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE

Mohammad HAJALI,
Directeur adjoint,
Centres culturels et bibliothèques,
Ministère de la Culture et de l'orientation nationale.

TUNISIA/TUNISIE

Abdel Kader BEN CHEIKH,
Chef de section de recherche: motivation à la lecture,
Institut des Sciences de l'Education,
Université de Tunis.

Technical Adviser/Conseiller technique

Slim BEN CHAABANE,
Chef,
Division de l'édition,
Société tunisienne de diffusion,
(STD).

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN/REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE POPULAIRE DU YEMEN

Omar ALGAWI,
Cultural Director,
Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Technical Adviser/Conseiller technique

Mohammed Abdel Wahab SHUDARY,
Head,
Information Section,
Ministry of Information.

YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC/
REPUBLIQUE ARABE DU YEMEN

Abdul Ghani Kassem GHALEB,
Assistant Director,
Curricula Department,
Ministry of Education.

II. OBSERVERS/OBSERVATEURS

A. MEMBER STATES/ETATS MEMBRES

INDIA/INDE

Abul Hasan,
Special Officer (Book Promotion),
Department of Education,
Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS/
UNION DES REPUBLIQUES SOCIALISTES SOVIETIQUES

Vladimir Sobolev,
Chief Editor,
"Progress" Publishers,
Moscow.

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI

Norman Alexander Daniel,
Cultural Attaché,
British Embassy,
Cairo.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

Rupert Prohme,
Deputy Permanent Delegate to Unesco,
(Principal observer)

John D. Backe,
Government Advisory Committee on Books and Library Programmes,
Washington, D.C.

Joseph L. Marek, Jr.
Regional Book Officer,
American Embassy,
Beirut.

B. ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM/ORGANISATIONS DU SYSTEME DES NATIONS UNIES

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les refugiés

Said A. Halim,
UNHCR Representative to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

United Nations Children's Fund/
Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance

Fuad Kronfol,
Programme Officer
Cairo Office

United Nations Development Programme/
Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement

F.M.S. El Suifi,
Office of the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Cairo.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa/
Commission économique des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique

K.R. Meyer,
Chief,
ECA/FAO Forest Industries Advisory Group for Africa,
Addis Ababa.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East/
Office de secours et des travaux des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés de Palestine dans le Proche-Orient

Miss Ulla Hyvönen,
Specialist for Libraries,
UNRWA,
Beirut.

International Labour Organization/
Organisation internationale du travail

Mohamed Aziz El Maraghi,
Director of the ILO Area Office,
Cairo.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture

S.T. Farouky,
Rural Institutions Officer,
(Agricultural Education),
FAO Regional Office for the Near East,
Cairo.

Ghannam YAHYA,
Acting Information Officer,
FAO Regional Office for the Near East,
Cairo.

C. OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES

Arab Postal Union/Union postale arabe

Mohsen Gomaa,
Conseiller au Secrétariat général.

League of Arab States/Ligue des Etats arabes

Mohamed Abdel-Kader Ahmad,
Documentalist,
Alecso.

Regional Centre for Functional Literacy in Rural Areas for the Arab States (ASFEC)/Centre regional pour l'alphabétisation fonctionnelle en milieu rural pour les Etats arabes (ASFEC)

Mr. K. Bestawros,
Editor-Translator i/c
Publications and Public Information.

George Amin Guirguis,
Librarian.

D. INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES NON GOUVERNEMENTALES

Franklin Book Programs

Byron Buck,
Program Officer.

Ahmed Riad Abaza,
Vice-President,
Franklin Book Programs Director,
Cairo Office.

International Federation for Documentation/
Fédération internationale de documentation

A. Kabesh,
Director-General,
National Information and Documentation Centre
(FID National Member),
Cairo.

International Group of Scientific,
Technical and Medical Publishers

Michael Kermian,
General Manager,
McGraw-Hill Book Company,
Beirut.

International Publishers' Association/
Union internationale des éditeurs

Michael Kermian,
General Manager,
McGraw-Hill Book Company,
Beirut.

World Confederation of Organizations of the
Teaching Profession/Confédération mondiale
des organisations de la profession enseignante

Afif Baalbaki,
Director,
WCOTP Arab Publications Office,
Beirut.

Haile Wolde Mikael,
President,
Teachers Association of Ethiopia,
Addis Ababa.

III. UNESCO SECRETARIAT

Alberto Obligado,
Assistant Director-General for Communication/
Sous-Directeur général pour l'information.

Julian Behrstock,
Director,
Office of Free Flow of Information and
International Exchanges/Directeur, Office
de la libre circulation de l'information et
des échanges internationaux.

Ahmed Kettani,
Office of Free Flow of Information and
International Exchanges/Office de la libre
circulation de l'information et des échanges
internationaux.

Wayne McLeod,
Department of School and Higher Education/
Département de l'enseignement scolaire et supérieur.

Bekaddour Ouldali,
Department of Mass Communication/
Département des moyens d'information.

Wilhelm Zachau,
Department of Mass Communication/
Département des moyens d'information.

Ishaq Qutub,
Head,
Social Science Division
ASFEC.

IV. EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT LIAISON SERVICE/
SERVICE DE LIAISON DU GOUVERNEMENT
EGYPTIEN

Ahmed Hassan,
Liaison Officer.

Samia Ahmed Aly,
Executive Secretary.

Soheir Ahmed Aly,
Public Relations.